

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND CONSERVATION



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Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Region 2 Headquarters, 3201 Spurgin Road, Missoula MT 59804
Patrick Rennie, Archaeologist, DNRC-TLMD, 1925 Eleventh Avenue, Helena MT 59620
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Al Christophersen, achristophersen@rmef.com
Missoula County Board of County Commissioners, 200 W. Broadway, Missoula MT 59801
Missoula County Floodplain Administrator, Attn: Todd Klietz, 435 Ryman, Missoula MT 59802
Missoula County Surveyor's Office, Attn: Chuck Wright, 200 W Broadway, Missoula MT 59802
Sun Ranch Group LLC, 1403 Hwy 287 N, Cameron MT 59720
Libby Maclay, 6404 Maclay Road, Lolo MT 59847-9628
Lazy K Ranch, 1220 Lincoln Parkway, Missoula MT 59802-3043
Kedoma Corporation, 2735 S 7th Ave. W, Missoula MT 59804
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The Sapphire Ranch, LLC has submitted an application for reciprocal exchange of road easements with the Southwestern Land Office of the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation. The exchange of easements would result in The Sapphire Ranch gaining access to its holdings primarily located on the east side of the Bitterroot River in Township 11 North, Range 19 West, and the State of Montana gaining access to two sections of University of Montana Trust Lands located in Township 11 North, Range 20 West. The general location is approximately 2 miles south of Lolo, MT. A map is located on the back of this notice.

The proposal is to exchange easements to provide legal access to each party's property holdings. The Sapphire Ranch property is encumbered by a Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation conservation easement which restricts development of the property to no more than 7 homes, 6 east of the river. The conservation easement also requires the ranch to maintain and manage a specified standard of habitat and resource management.

The State's parcels are currently utilized for grazing, and are without legal road access. By obtaining road access to the parcels, the State's management opportunities for the parcels increases, including competitive bidding for grazing leases and sale of timber and forestry products. Currently, both of the state's parcels are legally accessed by the Bitterroot River.

Construction of new roadway is currently under consideration. The current roadway is a floodplain barrier, and as part of the exchange and construction, portions of the old road would be obliterated. In addition, a bridge located on Squaw Creek would be rebuilt, eliminating fish obstruction and improving habitat.

The Department of Natural Resources and Conservation is required by the Montana Environmental Policy Act to assess potential impacts of proposed activities on state lands to the human and physical environment. Public comments on this project are being sought in order to complete that assessment.

Public comment will be taken for 21 days (through September 120, 2008). This request for public comment is also being posted on the DNRC website at http://www.dnrc.mt.gov/about_us/notices.asp

Comments may be submitted by email at dboruch@mt.gov. You may also mail written comments to SWLO-DNRC, Attn: Dana Boruch 1401 27th Avenue, Missoula MT 59804.

Dana M. Boruch
Right-of-Way Specialist
Southwestern Land Office

**Area map of Proposed Reciprocal Easement Exchange
between
Department of Natural Resource and Conservation
and
Sapphire Ranch LLC**

